Government of Canada Proposal on the Preparatory Process and Focus for Phase 2, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to be held in Tunis, November 16-18, 2005.

Summary

Canada is of the view that there is a need for a framework for planning the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society and its outcomes. This framework should be based upon the exceptional accord reached at the first phase of the Summit in Geneva in December 2003, recognizing that the WSIS is a single, unitary Summit. Thus, in preparing for Phase 2, Canada believes that UN Member States should use the carefully negotiated framework reflected in the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action as the basis for Tunis. The object is to facilitate planning for the second phase in Tunis and to provide an agreed-upon-framework for continued international co-operation post-Tunis.

Background

The first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva in December 2003, was highly successful. Its success was particularly noteworthy because it was the first Summit of its type ever held within the framework of the United Nations with a focus on the Information Society and the precedent-setting participation of the private sector and civil society. In the view of the Government of Canada, several unique factors contributed to the success of the first phase. These suggest an approach to planning and implementing the second phase in Tunis which could enhance its success and add significant value for participants. This proposal outlines one possible planning approach to the second phase of the WSIS and to its preparatory process.

Objectives of the Proposal

The objectives of this proposal are to:

- Agree upon a **simple conceptual framework and structure** for the Tunis Summit and especially for the wide range of associated Side Events, including the likely exhibition or ICT4D Platform, seminars, workshops and ICT demonstrations. This is vital to simplify planning and to maximize benefits to all participants.
- Develop that framework based upon the Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action which provide a powerful and durable roadmap for the WSIS process and beyond.
- Promote a framework related to applications of ICTs that benefit national planning associated with social and economic development.
- Seek to ensure that the framework reflects the WSIS objectives and provides **opportunities for countries to showcase their achievements and share experiences** in the areas highlighted by the WSIS including, for example, engagement of indigenous people.
- Avoid a lengthy negotiation process by not attempting to negotiate a new, detailed Declaration, including new or revised principles or Plan of Action.
• Recommend developing for the Summit a new and visionary output celebrating the world’s achievements since Phase I and putting forward a vision of the Information Society to inspire renewed commitment to the Geneva Declaration and Action Plan

• Encourage increased private sector participation, focusing on building partnerships around ICT applications and on ICT goods and services needed for social and economic development.

• Encourage continued civil society participation and partnerships.

• Suggest a reference tool or guide for planning purposes of the many Summit events. One example that has received international recognition is the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas and Plan of Action of Quito (ACAPAQ), developed in response to the Summit of the Americas Statement “Connecting the Americas,” and endorsed by the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference.

APPROACH

1. **The Tunis Outcome: Chair’s Visionary Communiqué, Leaders’ Statements, Substantive Reports and Announcements**

   To focus the attention of the world’s leaders on the realization of the Information Society, the Summit should, in its planning and in its Plenary Sessions, elaborate a unique vision of the Information Society to inspire renewed commitment to the Geneva Declaration and Action Plan. The second phase of the Summit should not issue a second lengthy bureaucratic Declaration or Action Plan but rather a short inspirational Chair’s Communiqué with accompanying Leaders’ statements, substantive reports and announcements. The Communiqué would celebrate world achievements in moving towards an Information Society.

   Canada considers that the final documents adopted by the first phase of the Summit provide a broadly accepted and practical framework for both phases of the Summit and beyond. The Tunis Phase of the WSIS should take note of the important principles and outcomes negotiated in Geneva. Canada proposes that the main Tunis Summit outputs also include reports on actions taken by stakeholders since Geneva and on any relevant actions or programs planned for after Tunis. These should demonstrate the benefits achieved by stakeholders through the mainstreaming of ICTs. In keeping with the Geneva agreement, such reports or outputs should highlight or ensure that the values of inclusiveness, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, freedom of opinion and freedom of expression, cultural diversity, good governance and the rule of law are recognized as fundamental to the information society.
2. **Overall Structure of the Summit**

a) **Focus on Themes, Clusters or “Tents” to Parallel the WSIS Declaration**
   
   (i). Canada proposes that the Summit and its many associated activities (side events, workshops) be structured to address broad themes or clusters which parallel the 11 key principles or themes in the Declaration and in section C of the Action Plan (see Annex 1).

   (ii) In addition to a visionary Chair’s Communiqué and the inclusive approach recommended above, there would be activities and outputs based upon the 11 themes or clusters which could be called **Atents**, symbolizing a meeting place where friends and partners are brought together. We could envisage up to 11 clusters or tents depending on ITU resources and organizational capacities. We also propose that discussions in each of the themes or clusters take account of the foundation issues addressed in Section A of the Geneva Declaration.

   (iii). Canada considers it appropriate for the WSIS Secretariat to continue with its earlier role of leading the formal planning of the many events in Tunis, in association with the Tunisian government, and others with whom the Secretariat wishes to consult, including the Bureau. Canada proposes that each Summit event (seminar, workshop, project demonstration, etc.) be considered within one of the 11 specific themes or principles in the Declaration and Plan of Action or be considered as one of the issues in Section A of the Declaration within a Section A “foundation” tent.

   For example, if there were to be 15-25 seminars, workshops or announcements related to the role of infrastructure, these would all be organized and listed under the theme or “tent” of “Information and Communication Infrastructure” (principle 2 in the Declaration).

   (iv). For planning purposes, Canada proposes that the **WSIS Secretariat create 3 or 4 small Advisory Groups with each one responsible for a cluster of 3 or 4 of the themes in the Geneva Plan of Action**. For example, there could be one cluster or “tent” that addresses the first three principles, i.e., (1) the role of governments and stakeholders, (2) the ICT infrastructure and (3) access to information. These Advisory Groups would ensure overall direction and guidance in the planning stage and avoid potential duplication. Most importantly, they would provide greater overall coherence to the potentially large number of workshops, seminars or side activities. These small advisory groups would be the organisational focus for the different clusters or “tents”. Dependent upon the ITU’s WSIS resources and availability of people, there could be up to 11 planning groups (or sub-groups) – one for each Geneva principle.

   (iv). With the exception of ITU or UN staff, all participants in such advisory groups would be on a voluntary basis and could include people from civil society, private sector, governments and international organizations to ensure participation of the fundamental stakeholders. The selection decision would rest with the WSIS Secretariat. The goal is to identify two, three or more knowledgeable persons for each advisory group to assist with structuring, ordering and, ideally, organizing the events. It would be similar to planning for any major conference. The **WSIS secretariat would lead or could provide support to each advisory group and would be the focal point for the planned outcomes.**
b) To emphasize the essential elements of the Geneva themes and to ensure involvement of the fundamental stakeholders at the detailed planning level, Canada would also recommend that the “tents” or clusters refer to a model developed in response to the 2000 Summit of the Americas Statement “Connecting the Americas”, i.e., the Agenda for Connectivity in the Americas and Plan of Action of Quito (ACAPAQ). This model, one of many possible models, was endorsed by the ITU’s Development Conference in the Istanbul Declaration, and by the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Marrakesh, 2002 (Res.128).

c) The ACAPAQ (see Annex 2) provides a simple conceptual model to help countries and interested parties to assess their current state of development and to develop inclusive plans which show how the three fundamental players (government, civil society, private sector) can collaborate to move toward the information society by building or developing necessary infrastructure, capacity for use and content. The model has been modified to note the importance of International Organizations in the WSIS context.

d) Canada proposes that the 3 or 4 Advisory Groups (addressing the 11 themes) use this simple matrix as the basis for discussion and planning of activities in each of the 11 sectors identified in the WSIS Action Plan. Thus, all sessions would ideally include speakers from each stakeholder group, and could have a similar format which would facilitate planning and evaluation of progress in a comparable manner in Tunis and, potentially, in future years in other fora.

e) Canada appreciates that Tunisia will be the host of the many side events that form part of the Summit. However, countries may wish to sponsor or champion certain workshops/seminars either before or during the Summit. Other workshops or seminars can be organized to respond to specific interest groups from the private sector, civil society and international organisations.

f) Canada advocates that the exhibition in Tunis should be structured to encourage the private sector to display products and services related to the applications, sectors and themes addressed in the Plan of Action.

**POTENTIAL OUTCOMES OF THE TUNIS PHASE**

1. Canada foresees a Summit where Leaders will endorse a short *visionary Chair’s Communiqué* or Chair’s Statement on the importance of the Information Society

2. At the Summit, Leaders’ statements would highlight success stories and achievements that put forward a vision of the Information Society to inspire renewed commitment to the Geneva Declaration and Action.

3. Reports on Internet governance and on financing issues as agreed in Geneva. These issues might also be the subject of separate seminars and workshops.
4. An agreed and common set of indicators on the uptake of ICTs by countries, and indicators on the impact of ICTs on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (based on work encouraged by the UN ICT Task Force in collaboration with other entities such as Canada’s ORBICOM, ITU, etc).

5. Other reports, agreed upon in the Geneva Plan of Action, could be tabled. These could include:
   a) National reports on e-strategies developed by 2005 [see C1.8a];
   b) Reports by international organizations and financial institutions on the use of ICTs for sustainable development [see C1.8f];
   c) Reports by international and regional organizations on successful experiences of mainstreaming ICTs [see C1.8 h] and in mainstreaming ICTs in their work programs [see C11.26c];
   d) Review of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and ICT mainstreaming [D1.27b], and other reports.

6. A practical model for the design and, particularly, implementation of National e-strategies, organized under a framework of 11 Atents inspired by the WSIS Action Plan.

   Canada believes the Summit should also include:

   • A showcase of expertise available from the private sector, NGOs and multilateral agencies, similar to the ICT4D exhibition in Geneva.

   • In each tent, thematic workshops, with participation from business and the civil society, which could produce reports forwarded to the Summit itself. These workshops and accompanying showcase modules should be organized/funded by champions from the three sectors

   • A Rapporteur’s Summary Report, after the Summit closure, for each of the tents or clusters would provide a useful and substantive record.

Post-Tunis. Canada considers the Tunis Summit as an important stepping stone in the world’s efforts to alleviate poverty and to attain the UN’s Millennium Development Goals. We will support and encourage continuing and sustained implementation of the activities identified in the WSIS Plan of Action.
ANNEX 1

ELEVEN THEMES CONTAINED IN THE GENEVA DECLARATION AND ACTION PLAN

1. The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development
2. Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for the Information Society
3. Access to information and knowledge
4. Capacity building
5. Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs
6. Enabling environment
7. ICT applications: benefits in all aspects of life
8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content
9. Media
10. Ethical dimensions of the Information Society
11. International and regional cooperation

As noted in the main paper, the foundation issues in the opening paragraphs of the Geneva Declaration should also be addressed within the context of the eleven themes.

Other Agreed Upon Areas for Tunis Discussion and Reports

1. See Action Plan, Section E. Follow-up and evaluation (indicators, performance evaluation, benchmarks).
2. UN Secretary General’s Working Group Report on Digital Solidarity Agenda.
3. UN Secretary General’s Working Group Report on Internet Governance.
ANNEX 2

This matrix is a **suggested guide**, tool or benchmark for planning purposes. It represents a model or blueprint for assessment of sectors, projects or applications, as adopted by CITEL in the Quito Action Plan and endorsed in the ITU Istanbul Declaration. It highlights the role of partnerships and, on the vertical axis, lists three key components in any national strategy for the development of an information society. It is not intended to be a reporting mechanism for Tunis but simply to assist in the planning of activities, such as seminars and workshops.

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<th>(Insert sector name; e.g., Health)</th>
<th>Government &amp; International Organisations</th>
<th>Civil Society</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use / Capacity Building</td>
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<td>Content</td>
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* International Organisations have been identified in the model given their potential role in Tunis and post-Tunis.